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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2033
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4780
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5993
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2358
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0095
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4128
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3828
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2022
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3157
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000418

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOISTS' INITIAL PRESS STATEMENTS MODERATE

REF: KATHMANDU 408

Classified By: Ambassador Nancy J. Powell. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (U) On April 12 and 13 as the extent of the Maoist victory in the Constituent Assembly election's 240 first-past-the-post races was becoming apparent, the two seniormost leaders of the Maoists spoke with the press. Maoist Chairman Pushpa Dahal (aka Prachanda) expressed support for maintaining the coalition culture in Nepal, and cordial relations with Nepal's neighbors. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai staked out the Maoists' claim to lead the next coalition government. Bhattarai added that he expected the United States to recognize the election results.

Prachanda's Conciliatory Statement After Winning Kathmandu-10

12. (U) Addressing his supporters and the media April 12 immediately after being declared the victor from constituency 10 in Kathmandu in Nepal's April 10 Constituent Assembly (CA) election, Maoist Chairman Pushpa Dahal (aka Prachanda) stated his party would continue to work with other political parties. He stated that the Maoists would adhere to the coalition culture during the transition period. Prachanda asked the international community not to doubt his party's commitment to democratic values. He asserted that the Maoists were committed to competitive politics and would maintain cordial relations with all, especially with Nepal's close neighbors China and India.

Bhattarai Stakes Maoist Claim To Lead Government

13. (U) In an interview April 13 with "The Kathmandu Post," the most widely read English language daily newspaper in Nepal, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, second to Prachanda in the Maoist hierarchy, asserted that, as the largest party in the new Assembly, the Maoists had the right to lead the next coalition government. He made it clear that the distribution of portfolios among political parties in the new government

would be based upon seats obtained through the election. Bhattarai said the Maoists would work in consensus with all other political parties and respect the letter and spirit of the Interim Constitution. Bhattarai explained that the Maoist's victory was due to the party having targeted and empowered the underprivileged, marginalized sectors of society, including women. Additionally, fundamentally the Nepalese people wanted to see a change of faces through the election. Bhattarai also indicated that he considered integration of the People's Liberation Army and Nepal Army to be part of moving forward with the peace process, although he admitted that in the long run the size of the army would need to be reduced.

Bhattarai Comments On International Relations

¶4. (U) Finally, Bhattarai said the Maoists would establish good relations with the international community. Replying to a query as to how the Maoists would view the United States, the senior leader commented that he was sure the United States respects democratic principles and must accept the verdict of the Nepalese people.

Comment

¶5. (C) During the campaign Bhattarai's comments were generally more hardline and aggressive than Prachanda's. Bhattarai's claim that the Maoists have the right to lead the next coalition government is not unexpected. If they end up as the largest party, they will have a strong claim.

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